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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1795  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5583  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7170  
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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3187  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - GAZA AND JAPAN-ROK  
RELATIONS

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Tuesday morning papers gave front-page play to Monday's summit in Seoul between Prime Minister Aso and ROK President Lee.

¶2. "Israel Targeting Senior Officials to Eradicate Hamas" On the Israeli military's mobilization of reserve troops, Jerusalem correspondent for the liberal Tokyo Shimbun wrote (1/13): "The Israeli decision to enlist reserves is meant to accomplish its initial goal of neutralizing Hamas before entering into a ceasefire.... Given that senior Hamas officials appear to be seeking shelter at hospitals and other public places out of fear of air strikes, urban warfare in the center of Gaza is highly likely."

¶3. "Trilateral Unity Must Be Maintained" On Monday's Japan-South Korea summit, the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri editorialized (1/13): "It is important for Japan and the ROK to have in-depth consultations on North Korea with the incoming Obama administration quickly in order to reaffirm a shared position of calling for North Korea to accept a vigorous nuclear verification regime.... North Korea is notorious for attempting to drive a wedge among negotiating parties. Japan and South Korea cannot tolerate such a negotiation tactic. They must maintain solid coordination with the new U.S. administration."

¶4. "'Matured Relations' Need to Be Institutionalized" The liberal Mainichi asserted (1/13): "Prime Minister Aso and ROK President Lee held a summit with the imminent launch of the Obama administration in mind.... It is meaningful that the leaders of Japan and South Korea jointly affirmed enhanced coordination with the U.S. ahead of the inauguration of President Obama. The two leaders need to translate this affirmation into specific action."

15. "Partners Should Unite" The conservative Sankei insisted (1/13): "What the U.S., Japan, and South Korea must do is to resuscitate a venue for tripartite policy coordination on North Korea, something that ceased to exist under the former Roh administration. The creation of such a consultative framework would enable Japan and South Korea to apply a brake on a possible unilateral concession to North Korea by the U.S., as evidenced by the Bush administration's delisting of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism."

SCHIEFFER